

## Dec. 9 - 15, 2013 Kentucky Waterfowl Ground Counts

Mother Nature threw Kentucky and the central US a curve ball this past week. A wintry mix and below normal seasonal temperature have gripped the state beginning late last week. A mixture of rain, sleet, ice and finally snow blanketed many regions. What fell and where depended upon your location. Since then night time lows have been in the teens and daytime highs in the low 30's at best. This has resulted in many shallow water areas and ponds becoming ice locked forcing birds to larger reservoirs, spring fed ponds, creeks and rivers. The forecast for the near future indicates this pattern will continue for at least another week maybe longer.

Weekend weather created an unusual event in the Southeast Region where KDFWR received reports of an ducks and other waterbirds landing on icy highways sometime during the night. The exact number is unkown but these birds probably mistook the highway for open water. Redhead, ring-necked ducks and mergansers as well as horned grebes were reported. Unfortunately a number of these birds were hit by traffic before they could be captured and moved to safer areas.

Reports from area biologists indicate a good number of birds remain and have increased on some WMAs. Mallards are the most common duck species reported encountered accounting for nearly 80% of the total ducks counted. Snow and white-fronted goose numbers increased at Ballard and Sloughs WMAs . Canada goose numbers in the state remain low and most birds encountered appear to be residents as noted from band recoveries. Hunting reports have been mixed with most reports of success coming from the western third of the state. However, good hunting can still be had in other regions if you can find open water.

The following list below, represent the results of ground counts made by local KDFWR wildlife biologists. The locations and counts presented below probably represent a minimal number of what can be expected listed on the surveyed areas. Good hunting!

Location	Number	Species Composition	Comments
Ballard WMA <i>Last counted 12/8/13</i>	61,200 ducks 49 CG geese 2,650 W-F geese 5,000 Snow geese	95% mallard, Remainder a mix of gadwall, ring-necked duck, wigeon, wood duck and black duck.	Ground snow/ice covered with msu's icing over.
Barren River Lake	No count		
Birdsville Island	No count		
Kentucky/Barkley Lakes	No Count		
Duck Island	612 ducks 120 coots	50% green-winged teal, 40% mallard, remainder gadwall and black duck	Central impoundment with skim ice. Will probably freeze later in week.
Boatwright WMA <i>Last counted 12/8/13</i>	47,600 ducks	80% mallard, 15% ring-necked and 5% a mix of gadwall, wigeon, pintail and black duck	Ground snow/ice covered with msu's icing over.
Doug Travis WMA	3,400 ducks 2 Tundra Swan	95% mallard, remainder a mix of dabblers and ring-necked ducks	All wells running to keep open water.
Clear Creek WMA	No Count		
Peabody WMA	2,018 ducks 600 CG 4 SG 4 Coot	60% mallard, 20% other puddle ducks, and 20% divers.	Shallow water frozen. Most birds observed on refuge and deep strip pits.

Sloughs WMA	11,000 ducks 4,350 WFG 8,000 SG 315 CG 75 Swan	80% mallard.	Birds feeding on winter wheat/standing corn. Shallow water is frozen. Most waterfowl staying on refuge.
Yellowbank WMA	690 ducks 60 CG	75% mallard, 11% black duck, 6% gadwall.	Most birds on refuge. MSU's have thick ice.
Blue Grass Army Depot (all lakes and ponds)	120 ducks 45 CG	30% gadwall, 15% mallard, 15% black duck, remainder divers mostly ring-neck ducks	Waters levels high on lakes. MSU at 70% capacity.
Herrington Lake	No Count		
Taylorsville Lake	30 ducks 0 Geese	85% mallard, remainder black duck and gadwall.	Lake 3' above winter pool. Water extends into trees. MSU's full but frozen.
Cedar Cr./Dix R. WMA	No Count		
Green River WMA	No Count		
Cave Run Lake	300 ducks 225 CG	33% mallard, 10% gadwall, remainder assorted divers, redhead, scaup, bufflehead, ring-neck duck	Lake open small enclosed embayments with sheet ice. MSU's surrounding lake are ice-locked